
BACKGROUND

2008EMPR0015-000352
March 13, 2008

Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

SULLIVAN MINE CHRONOLOGY

May 17, 2006 - Fatal accident at Sullivan Mine

Four people were killed in an accident at a water sampling shed located at the toe of a reclaimed dump at the Sullivan Mine in Kimberley.

May 26, 2006 - Chief inspector of mines issues directives and hazard alert

The investigation was the statutory responsibility of the chief inspector of mines in accordance with the Mines Act. The chief inspector at the time, Fred Hermann, launched an immediate investigation and ordered interim measures to ensure that a similar event could not happen at any other mine site in the province. Directives issued by the chief inspector of mines following the accident remain in place, and the chief inspector recommended additional amendments. The directives applied to all major operating mines and all mines undergoing reclamation.

Oct. 31, 2006 - Chief inspector of mines releases report

The ministry released a detailed fatality report with recommendations. The report was provided to the provincial coroner and concluded the investigation into the events of May 15–17, 2006 by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

March 20, 2007 - Interim report

An interim report with preliminary technical insights was posted to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources' website on March 20, 2007. The report was authored by a research committee investigating the incident.

July 9-13, 2007 - Coroner's inquest - Kimberley

Recommendations were released by the jury, who ruled the deaths accidental. Of the 16 recommendations, six apply to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, eight to the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) and two to Teck Cominco.

Sept. 10-14, 2007 – Health, Safety and Reclamation Committee meetings

The committee, appointed under Section 34 of the Mines Act and comprised of three representatives each from labour and industry with the chief inspector of mines as chair, reviewed the recommendations of the Sullivan inquest jury. The committee developed amendments to the code to implement the report's recommendations.

Jan. 22, 2008 – Proposed amendments to the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code

All of the inquest recommendations have been addressed and most have been incorporated in the revised Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia. The amendments include adopting new reporting requirements for mine managers in the event of an accident or dangerous occurrence and creating consistency with WorkSafeBC standards. While it is not physically possible to inspect all mine sites annually as one of the recommendations calls for, mine inspections continue to be a top priority and are scheduled based on the assessment of risk and upon non-compliance with the health and safety provisions as outlined in the Mines Act.

March 13, 2008 – Order-in-council – Amendment Approval

Under Section 34 of the Mines Act, amendments to the code came into force on the approval of the lieutenant-governor in council.

Ongoing

A technical panel consisting of representatives from the ministry, Teck Cominco, and the University of British Columbia, as well as scientists, continues to meet periodically to direct 24/7 monitoring of the Sullivan waste dump site. Knowledge acquired by the panel will assist mine operations around the world in mitigating risk with respect to similar waste dumps.

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